Commission seeking *inter alia,* the improved pay scales for the Armed Forces Personnel. The Armed Forces have also sought a better package for Personnel Below Officers' Rank (PBOR) that includes brighter career prospects and enhanced pensionary benefits.

Vacancies in armed forces

3705. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of posts are lying vacant in defence forces of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what initiatives are being taken by Government to fill the posts in defence services, on priority basis?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) A total number of 14.165 posts of officers and 20,432 posts of Personnel Below Officer Rank (PBORs) are presently vacant in the Armed Forces Out of these vacancies, the number of vacant posts of officers in the Army, Navy and Air Force are 11,238, 1,399 and 1,528 respectively. Similarly, in the case of Personnel Below Officers Rank (PBOR), a total number of 3665 and 16767 posts are vacant in the Navy and Air Force respectively. There are no vacant posts of PBORs in the Army.

Several steps have been taken by the three Services to make the career in Armed Forces attractive and to fill up the vacant posts. All officers including those in Short Service Commission (SSC) are now eligible to hold substantive rank of Captain, Major and Lieutenant Colonel after 2,6 and 13 years of reckonable service respectively. The tenure of SSC officers has been extended to 14 years in the three Services.

Besides, the Armed Forces have undertaken sustained image projection and publicity campaign to create awareness among the youth on the advantages of taking up a challenging and satisfying career. Candidate-friendly recruitment procedures to attract more number of candidates and a focused publicity drive in various institutions to attrack potential candidates have been undertaken. Awareness campaigns, participation in career fairs

and exhibitions, advertisements in print and electronic media, motivational lectures in schools, colleges are also some of the other measures in this direction.

Ship building capability of defence shipyards

3706. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact the current ship building capability of defence shipyards does not match our annual requirement of six warships and one submarine, that are required to replace the navy's retiring ships;

(b) whether it is a fact that at present, only two to three warships are inducted every year, as it takes nine years to build a frigate in India, while the same is built in five years abroad; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to modernize the shipyards in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI RAO INDERJEET SINGH): (a) and (b) The current ship building capacity of defence shipyards does not entirely match the requirement of Navy for replacement of ships in a phased manner. The build period of some indigenous frigates has been higher as compared to that of imported ships. In India, generally indigenous design and development of systems takes place concurrently with construction of warships. Delays occur primarily due to concurrent development and construction. The indigenous content of warship building in India has, been steadily increasing. Five indigenous warships were commissioned in 2005-06.

(c) The Government is providing assistance to modernize and to improve the infrastructure in Goa Shipyard Limited, Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited, Mazagon Dock Limited, and Cochin Shipyard Limited to facilitate faster building of ships.

Import of defence items

3707. SHRI BHAGIRATHI MAJHI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have imported any defence required items including raw materials for the defence use during the last three years;